THE EFFECT OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY ON EMPLOYEE'S

SELF-EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Employee's dealing with the dilemmas at work is nowadays a very common issue. They are facing problems in empowering themselves due to globalization, competition, workload and mergers and acquisition. The purpose of this paper is to present a theoretical model aimed at understanding the workplace spirituality (WS) and its effect on employee's self-empowerment.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: This paper is opted for exploratory study using secondary data including research papers published in journals, books, articles and webpages.

Findings: The paper provides the insights of how workplace spirituality or spiritual intelligence is beneficial and its relationship and its effect with employee's self-empowerment with the help of theoretical model known as "Workplace Spirituality Model for employee's Self-Empowerment". This model helps in understanding the concept of introducing spirituality in our life and knowing ourselves better so that the employee's can bring out our hidden qualities and be happy with the work we do.

Research Limitations/ Implications: Because of chosen research approach, the research results may lack generalizability. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to research on proposed topic further by involving the primary data.

Originality/ Value: This paper fulfils the identified needs to know the importance of spirituality in workplace and how it can improve the self-empowerment of the employee's.

KEYWORDS: Workplace Spirituality, Spirituality, Empowerment, Self-Empowerment, Spiritual Intelligence

Original Article

INTRODUCTION

In a changing and dramatic rise in organisation complexity it is becoming difficult for employee's to work effectively. Empowerment is one of the important concept in HRM and nowadays aspirants are looking for empowerment in their job. More than monetary prospect in a job, employee's are now looking for self-empowerment in their job which gives them satisfaction and motivation to do their job. Competitions are increasing in organisation internally and externally. And to overcome with it, we need our employee's to be happy in their work and be focused. But in such a competitive environment and pressure arising from home employee's are unable to focus and perform. Here spirituality is playing a very important role. Organisations are trying to incorporate spirituality by mode of mediation in which employee's are able to talk to themselves and empower themselves by mastering their thoughts, mind and feelings. Spirituality is not only a concept of understanding

"self" but it is process of "self-enlightenment" (Dehler & Welsh, 1994), and converting all the negative energy into positive energy so that they can find the meaning and purpose of doing their job.

Spirituality was already existing but it has gained its interest in workplaces as life is becoming so demanding and people are unable to balance their personal and professional life. This paper states that those organizations rich in spirituality will have working conditions that support self-empowerment.

This paper contributes in several ways in field of research. This paper will first present a literature review about workplace spirituality, its definition and its effects on employee's. Secondly, it will also discuss the implications of those effects on self-empowerment. Thirdly, it will present a theoretical model aimed at understanding the relationship between workplace spirituality and self-empowerment and finally, draws conclusions.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

To study and understand the concept of Workplace spirituality and its effect on employee's self-empowerment.

RESEARCH DESIGN/ METHODOLOGY

Exploratory Research (Tools Used: Secondary Data- Including research papers published in journals, articles, books and web pages).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From past few years workplace spirituality has emerged to be the topic of interest in the corporate to maintain a positive environment for the employee's. Workplace spirituality is a movement that started in early 1920s in US. It started as level of activity where individual discover to live their faith or spiritual values in the workplace. Few definitions of Spirituality are:

- (Krishnakumar & Neck 2002) "If this spirituality is allowed to be expressed (Lips-Wiersma & Mills 2002) on an individual level, identify enhanced creativity, increased honesty and trust within an organisation and increased commitment."

- (Guillory, 2000), "Spirituality has been defined as our inner consciousness a specific form of work feeling that energizes action".

- (Delbecq, 1999), "The unique inner search for the fullest personal development through participation into transcendent mystery".

- (Moxley 1999), Spirituality offers the opportunity for employee's to bring their 'whole selves to work'.

- (Konz & Ryan) in their spiritual analysis of the mission statements of Jesuit Universities (1999) say, "Spirituality grounds people in their work and allows them to connect with the transcendent in all they do."

- (Dehler & Welsh, 1994), "a process of self-enlightenment".

- (Vaughan), defined "spiritual intelligence enables the person to distinguish reality from illusion. Spiritual intelligence depends on the capacity to see things from more than one prospective and to recognize the relationship between perception, belief and behaviour."

- (The god spot in workplace: Spiritual Intelligence)**,** "defines spiritual intelligence as a unit to measure- allows human beings to look at problems related to meaning and value. So that life and action can be placed in a wider, richer meaning giving context".

- (Valarek, 2009), defines "spirituality in seven general categories as: searching for meaning, and purpose, living in harmony with others, personal wholeness, wellness, holistic, achieving personal growth, ethics, integrity or values and belief in the divine and sense of justice or fairness".

Definition of Spirituality in Workplace

- Spirituality in the Workplace is about individuals and organizations seeing work as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to grow and to contribute to society in a meaningful way. It is about care, compassion and support, about integrity and people being true to themselves and others.

- Giacolone & Jurkiewics (2010) provide the following definition: "Aspects of the workplace, either in the individual, the group, or the organization, that promotes individual feelings of satisfaction through transcendence. To elaborate, that the process of work facilitates employee's sense of being connected to a non-physical force beyond themselves that provide feelings of completeness and joy."

- (Smith and Rayment 2007), "Spirituality in the Workplace is about individuals and organizations seeing work as a spiritual path, as an opportunity to contribute to society in a meaningful way".

- (Guillory, 2000), "spirituality has been defined as our inner consciousness, a specific form of work feeling that energizes action".

- Ashmos & Duchon (2000), identified and tested the construct of spirituality at work "by identifying the dimensions of that construct" and concluded that workplace spirituality is "the recognition that employee's have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community."

- (Barnett, Krell, and Sendry, 1999, p. 563), "a worldview plus a path".

- (Clark 1958),"It can be most characteristically described as the inner experience of the individual when he senses a 'beyond', especially as evidenced by the effect of this experience on his behaviour when he actively attempts to harmonize his life with the beyond".

- (Dehler and Welsh, 1994), "a process of self-enlightenment".

From the above definitions we can conclude that spirituality is the relationship one has with one's self. It is a sense of personal insight and interest towards universal acceptance for love, integrity, truthfulness towards ourselves. The above definitions can be best explained with the help of this flow chart.
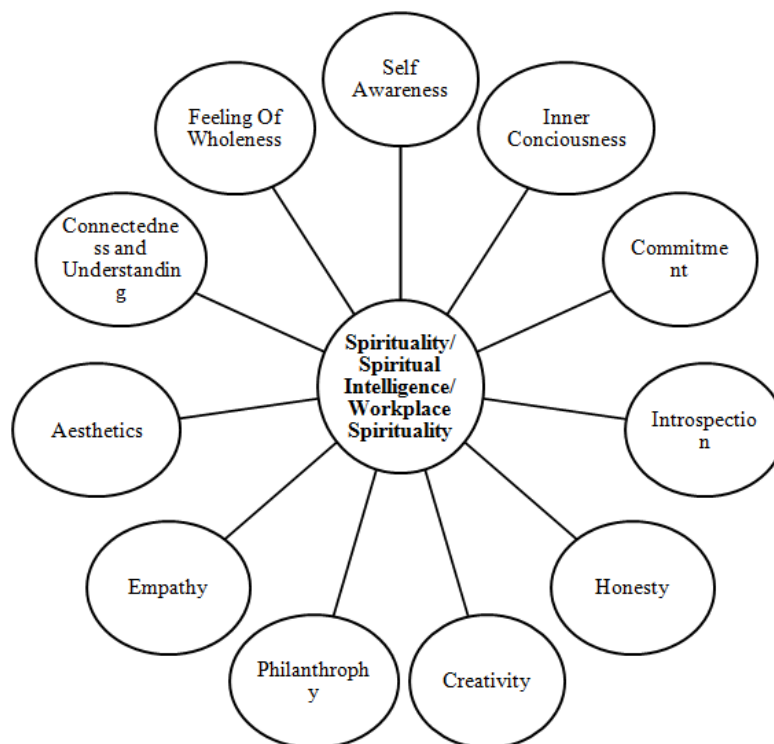
Figure 1: Meaning of Spirituality/ Spiritual Intelligence/ Workplace Spirituality

Before understanding what is self-empowerment we need to understand what we mean by empowerment. "Empowerment" is the process of enhancing feeling of self-efficacy and sense of owing a job (Aswathappa, 2011). Self-efficacy is the extent or strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals (Bandura, 1992, 1994, 1995,1997). In his theories of self-efficacy he gave one theory known as self-concept theory, explain "how people perceive and interpret their own existence from clues they receive from external sources, focusing on how these impressions are organized and how they are active throughout life". The concept of "self" consist of real self ("who am I"), ideal self ("what I want to be") and projected self ("What actions I do that people interpret my ideal self"). (Bandura, Purkey, 1988) suggested that the self-concept is learned (i.e., not present at birth); organized (in the way it is applied to the self); and dynamic (i.e., ever-changing, and not fixed at a certain age).

As far as Self-Empowerment is concerned, according to (Peter, 2008) it means taking charge of our own life, in our workplace, with our colleagues, with our subordinates, with our superiors, with our body, with our illness and caring for ourselves. He added that everyone has power to control and understand themselves and others but only the problem is that we don't have internal belief system in control. Empowerment is gaining knowledge and understanding and self-empowerment is gaining knowledge and understanding self. (Famularo, 2002), explained the self-empowerment cycle by listing 34 tools of empowerment. He explained that everyone have to be focused and have passion and love for their work. He added that we need to open your mind and inspire ourselves and others with our work. Success can only be achieved if failure is part of our life and when we are balanced emotionally and physically. In his cycle of self-empowerment we can see how the passion with all these 34 tools leads us to achieve our vision or dream.

Figure 2: Cycle of Self-Empowerment

(Fraken, 1994), said that when people know themselves they can maximize outcomes because they know what they can and cannot do. Self-empowerment here explains the selfhood, self-esteem, assessing self-image and self-determination. We should first understand the theoretical concepts of self-empowerment. Self-hood is the feeling of individuality which means acquiring self-knowledge. That is knowing accurate and real self (Borba, 2001). Self-esteem the way we see and think about ourselves. (Branden, 1994), gave six pillars of self-esteem:

- Living consciously

- Self-acceptance

- Personal responsibility

- Self-assertiveness

- Living purposefully

- Personal integrity

Where self-esteem can be broadly classified into 2 groups that are high self-esteem (means we are comfortable with who we are) and low self-esteem (means we do not value our true worth). In case of low self-esteem it will result into negative expectations which will include low effort or more anxiety resulting failure and self-blame. So employee's with low self-esteem will have less self-empowerment in doing his/ her job. Same in case of self-determination where employee has power or ability to make decisions without getting influenced with others.

Self-empowerment is not only the concept of understanding or knowing ourselves but it is the concept of knowing ourselves, but understanding and controlling our negative energies and making ourselves happy in our work so that we feel motivated and committed and enjoy what we do.

ANALYSIS

From the above literature we can analyse how spirituality is playing an important role in employee's self-empowerment. In 24*7 work life employee's are closed in one shell that is their workplace. As we say self-empowerment means stability of our thoughts, feelings and mind. It is a feeling of happiness, love, success, harmony and peace.

Employee's are facing so many issues in workplace be it from their superiors or their colleagues they are unable to handle and cope up with it.in everyday life so many situations come and each situations have two things but we have to see which thing is in control and which is not. The thing which is in control is our mind and which is not in control is the person opposite to us. So we have to deal with the situation in positive way (Shivani, 2014). Hence, Employee's should have power to convert such negative situations into positive actions. Employee's should have will power to ignite their passion to be happy and strong.

Spirituality in workplace helps the employee's to overcome such issues by knowing their inner beliefs and understanding about themselves and others, "self-awareness". It develops love for humanity in the sense of care for others. It creates the positive and peaceful environment resulting into satisfaction towards the job. It nourishes human connections which enhances the relationships within the team mates and enhances quality of life and work performance. Thus, workplace spirituality helps in developing values and principle and adds purpose and commitment for the job.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of analysis the theoretical model is created to understand the effect of workplace spirituality on self-empowerment. The model is as follow:
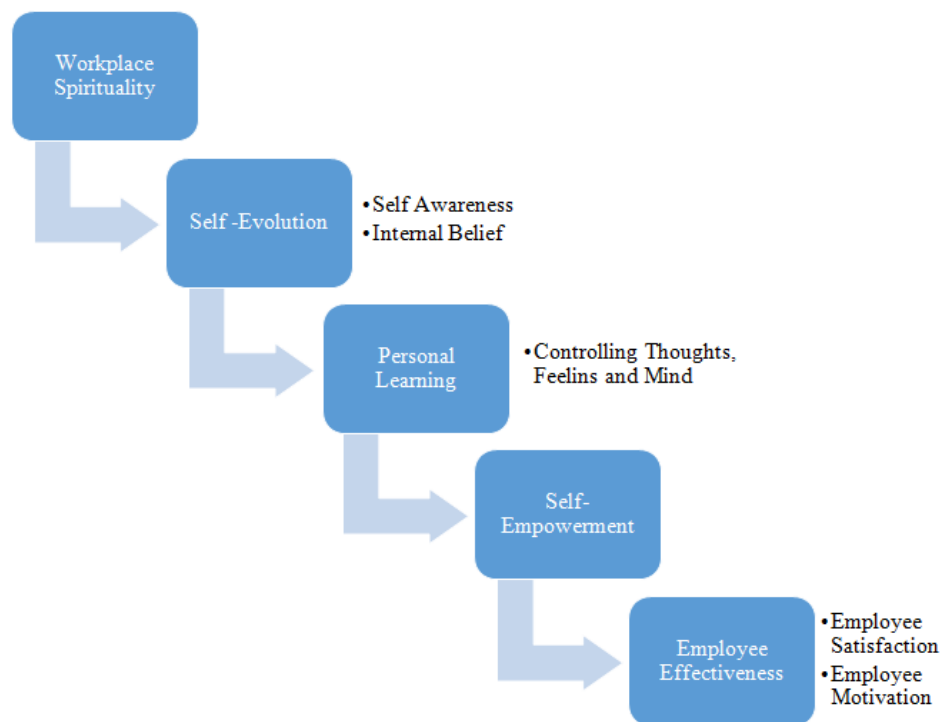

Figure 3: Workplace Spirituality Model for Employee Self-Empowerment

The above model explains the effect of workplace spirituality on employee's self-empowerment. Spirituality in workplace results into the self-evolution of the employee where he tries to understand his/ her inner belief and find meaning and purpose in his/ her job. Leading to personal learning which help in controlling thoughts, mind and feelings and analysing the situations for converting the negative situations into positive actions. Thus, resulting in self-empowerment of employee's which help in making them happy, passionate and love for their work and understand which work is best for them. Mental peace is very essential nowadays for doing any kind of work. Spirituality help us to know

our strengths and weaknesses and give us the capability and solutions to overcome our weaknesses. Thus, resulting in employee effectiveness i.e. employee satisfaction and motivation. We can see how spirituality is interrelated to self-empowerment and help the employee's to increase their empowerment to focus their inspiration and inculcate positive energy resulting happiness for what we do.

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